

Commissioner's Weekly Wrap Up

DCS Communications Office

July 30, 2004

This Week In Central Office

Monday, July 26

Commissioner Miller visited the Bradley County and Madisonville Group Homes.

Tuesday, July 27

Commissioner Miller visited the Nashville Transition Center.

The Week Ahead

Monday, August 2 & Tuesday, August 3

Commissioner Miller will travel to Gatlinburg for the Juvenile and Family Court Judges Conference.

Wednesday, August 4

Commissioner Miller will visit the Inman Group Home in Tullahoma.

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CONGRATULATIONS REGIONAL STAFF! Community Forums Continue ... and the feedback is amazing!



Regional Administrators and county staff continue leading community forums seeking local perspectives on what can be accomplished collaboratively to keep Tennessee's children safe and families strengthened. Both public and media response has been extremely positive!

These forums will no doubt serve as a catalyst for partnership and positive change within each community.

THANK YOU to all those who have spent hours listening to and fostering relationships with your community! You are appreciated!

To view a complete statewide community forum listing, please visit www.state.tn.us/youth/CommunityForums.htm

From the desk of Viola P. Miller: Salaries and other important stuff

Thanks to all of you in the CM series who have written nice notes about the raises. As I anticipated, I received many more emails from those people in DCS who did not benefit.

First of all to the support staff that have written...I agree with everything you have said. You are vitally important to the work of this agency. Your contribution is incredible and very much appreciated.

Here's the challenge...you are in state government-wide positions. DCS alone cannot alter your salaries or raises. That would have to be done across the board for all agencies. If I could do it alone, I would. I can't and I'm sorry.

Child benefit workers, we are working on reclassifying your positions in a way that will reward your work. Please be patient. Rome wasn't built in a day.

We did request upgrades for additional positions, but didn't get the funds. Please know that you are valued, not forgotten, and we will continue to work for better salaries.

Please send all future recommendations and concerns to Deputy Commissioner [Tom Riche](#).

I've done all that I can do for the present, but will live to fight another day. You have my promise that I will continue to do all in my power to work toward equitable salaries in DCS. In the spirit of full disclosure, you should know that we do have approval to continue to increase the CM's and TC salaries over the next two years. There are no other guarantees except our commitment to address your concerns.

That said, let's talk about kids:

I have spent a great deal of my time during July visiting the group homes and YDC's operated by DCS. It has been an incredible experience. I am somewhat amazed that this agency has been in place since 1996 and yet we seem to continue to exist in parallel universes.

Any child in the custody of our agency, regardless of how they came to us, is in a public child welfare system. Yet our JJ kids seem to exist on a different plain. These kids need, as do all our kids:

- ◆ Connection with their families and communities;
- ◆ An opportunity to grow and develop into high functioning adults who can contribute to society;
- ◆ The right to make choices and experience consequences;
- ◆ The commitment of the agency to insure and measure good outcomes.

Our regional leadership must include these folks in the change process currently taking place in the agency. How can our group home, YDC and JJ case managers be made integral to the new departmental vision? They must have a place at the table. All the well-being and permanency outcomes that apply to our D&N children must apply to them as well.

Let me say that I have met during the past month some incredibly dedicated and committed staff that genuinely likes these kids. Most importantly I have met

some amazingly bright, articulate, goal oriented young people.

Yes, indeed, I've also met many who we will not impact in a positive way. I have met a number of very troubled youth who break my heart.

But if we are who we say we are: an agency committed to safety, permanency, and well being; an agency who believes all children deserve a home with loving adults; that all families have strengths; we then must include our JJ kids in this big vision. They are ours. We are their only hope. We must not waste the opportunity.

The End

Policy Revision to Sick Leave Transfer Program



The Sick Leave Transfer Program allows state employees to donate leave to other state employees who are members of the Sick Leave Bank. Employees receiving donated sick leave must also have exhausted all of their own accumulated sick, annual, and compensatory leave and have received payment for all approved days through the Sick Leave Bank. Additional eligibility criteria are outlined in the Department of Personnel's Attendance and Leave Policy Manual beginning on page 21.

Currently, employees requesting to donate leave must agree to donate a minimum of ten (10) days (75 or 80 hours depending upon the employee's work schedule). Effective July 1, 2004, the minimum donation under this program will be reduced to five (5) days (37.5 or 40 hours depending upon the employee's work schedule). This policy change is intended to provide employees a greater opportunity to take advantage of this valuable program.

The Department of Personnel is in the process of adjusting the appropriate pages in the policy manual and adjusting the PDF version of the manual on the website. If you have questions about the Sick Leave Transfer Program or the Sick Leave Bank in general, please contact Abby Stroud at 615-532-5541.

Andrea Walks for Tennessee's Children



Online registration is now available for First Lady Andrea Conte's child advocacy center walk-a-thon! Please visit the link below to register for the statewide walk to raise money for Tennessee's CACs!

www.active.com/event_detail.cfm?event_id=1149520



Worrying cannot take the trouble out of tomorrow; but it will take the strength out of today.

Author Unknown

Individual commitment to a group effort, that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.

Vince Lombardi

You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.

Woodrow Wilson

Praise and Blame, Gain and Loss, Pleasure and Pain, Fame and Disrepute are the eight worldly winds. They ceaselessly change. As a mountain is unshaken by the wind, so the heart of a wise person is unmoved by the changes on this earth.

Buddha

Winner's don't make excuses. The minute you start talking about what you're going to do if you lose, you have lost

George Shultz, U.S. Secretary of State

The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands.

Robert M. Persig

Don't dwell on who or what you should have been, but rather be proud of who you are.

Author Bill Bertram
